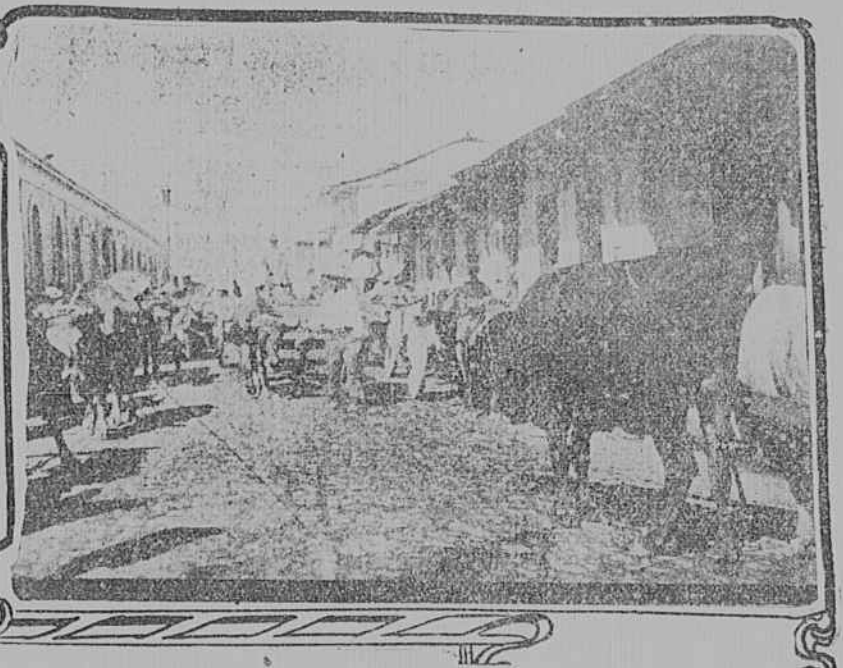
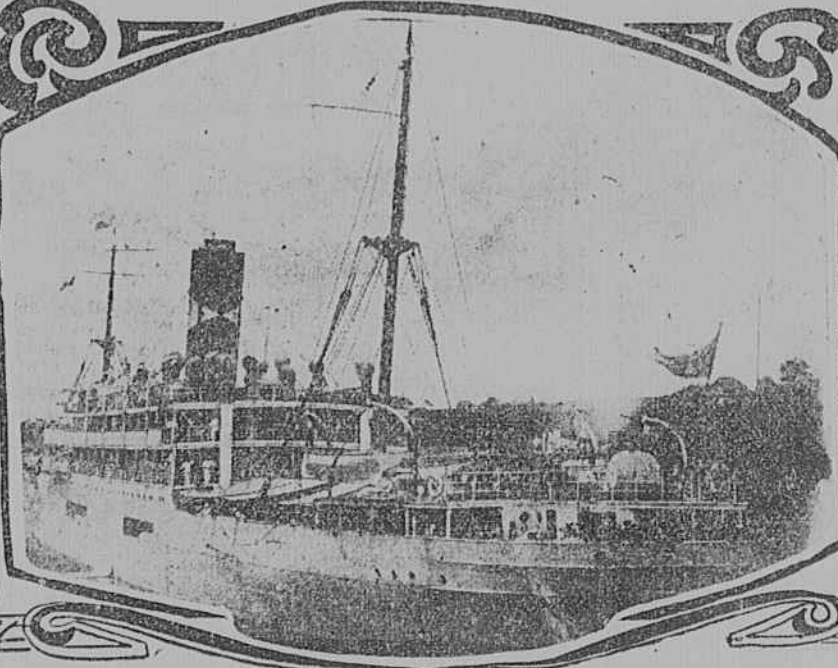
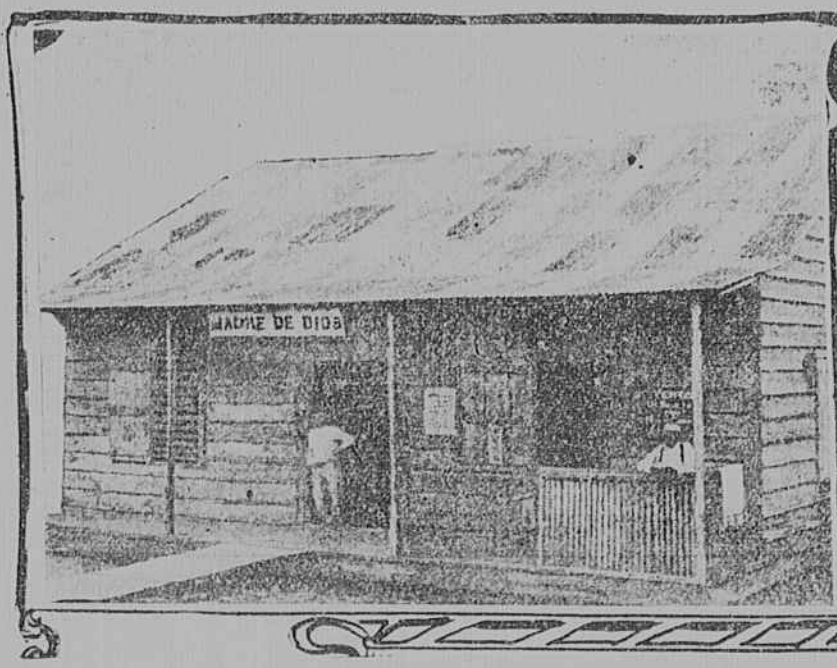


Beautiful Costa Rica, the Switzerland of Central America



"WE STOP AT MADRE DE DIOS."

"WE ENTER COSTA RICA AT PORT LIMON."

STREET SCENE IN SAN JOSE.

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.

COME with me this morning for a trip through the Switzerland of Central America. We are in the mountains of Costa Rica, the upper end of the Andes, north of the range through which we are cutting our great ditch at Panama. We are in a land made up of mountains. It is 150 miles wide and over 100 miles long, and the most of it is composed of those tropical highlands some of which rise the clouds at two miles and more above the Caribbean sea. It is a land of rugged mountains and of earthquakes which destroy cities, but nevertheless it is one of the most beautiful parts of the face of our mother earth.

At the Caribbeian Gateway.

We enter Costa Rica at Port Limon, its gateway to the Atlantic. We have sailed north from Pinar del Rio, the last town of the Panamanian republic, and been landed at a wooden wharf.

ment of 5000 people which annually ships to us at least one-tenth of all the bananas we eat. It exports every year over 11,000,000 bunches, or about 150,000,000 bunches, enough to give one to almost every soul in the world. The town belongs largely to the United Fruit Company, which does an immense banana business here, but by no means the whole. It has over 1000 workmen employed on the Costa Rican plantations, but there are probably one-half as many more on the outside estates.

As our ship comes to anchor we see at the wharves cars filled with bananas and watch an endless river of the green fruit flowing on the long carrying belts into the holds of the steamers. One belongs to the Hamburg-American and another to the United Fruit Company. The bananas from here are taken to New Orleans, Mobile, New York and Boston. They go also to Manchester and Bristol in England, and at last find their resting place in something

like 1,500,000,000 stomachs all over the world. We shall find bananas for sale at the stations as we go up the railroad to San Jose, and will pay for them just about the same as at home. The banana is the poor man's fruit, and it can be bought for from 1 to 2 cents a bunch, for that is what the apple fruit is called in any part of the Union.

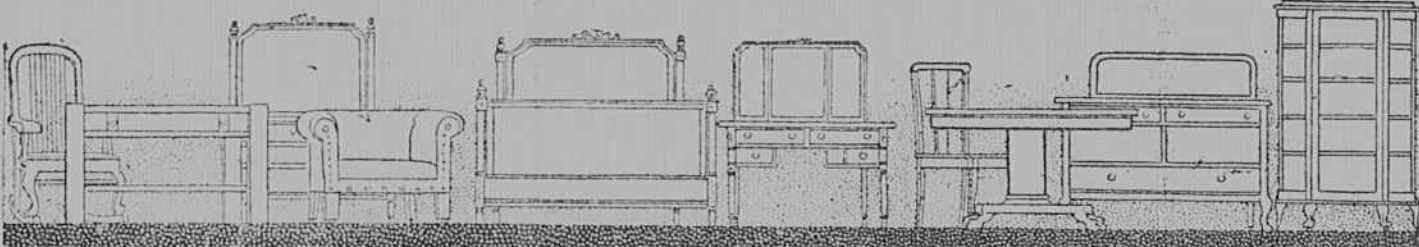
Indeed, I do not know but that it may be even cheaper within a few years from now. The plantations are growing, and a rival company is being formed here to compete with our trust. This is the Atlantic Company, which, as I am told, has bought many of the outside plantations and is about to make a fight for the trade. It is backed by some West Indian Jews in combination with the Hamburg-American Steamship Line, which wants a share in the freight. It has much to do, however, before it can successfully compete with the United Fruit Company. It will require a new port and will

have to build railroads to bring the bananas down to their ships. This banana business is not a small proposition. The United Fruit Company, which has done more than any other to give us cheap fruit, has many great interests here outside the bananas, and it has farms and ranches where it raises the cattle, horses and mules used on its banana estates. The ranches are in the highlands, and upon them there are now 11,000 head of stock, including horses and mules raised from imported stallions and jackasses. There are also 1,000 cows, from which comes the butter used in the banana trust commissary, and there are other farms for raising vegetables and various supplies. The business is so extensive that all efforts are made to cut the cost to the lowest possible notch, and I should doubt the ability of the Atlantic Company to compete as to prices.

Beautiful Costa Rica.
But let us come back to the beauty

Furniture of the Better Sort on Our Easy Payment Plan

If you are living in a rut you are rusting out—existing in the dark, friend. Why not come across into the sun-flushed Valley of Hope and Happiness? The road leads straight and true—why not take it and get those home furnishings to-day by paying the "easy way" and just as you say? "Credit dispels the darkness"—it is the search-light that brightens the road that leads to a happy home of your own. Come in and get out of that rut!

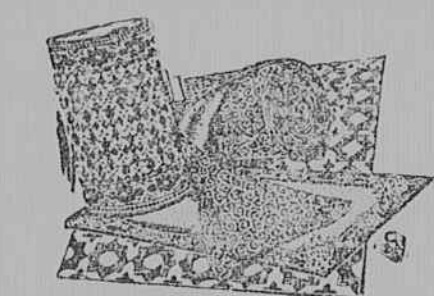


Let Him Dream Care Away in a Cozy Bedroom

\$75.00 Bedroom Suites	\$60.00	\$35.00 Bedroom Suites	\$24.00
\$100.00 Bedroom Suites	\$80.00	\$45.00 Bedroom Suites	\$36.00
\$125.00 Bedroom Suites	\$90.00	\$55.00 Bedroom Suites	\$44.00
\$150.00 Bedroom Suites	\$115.00	\$65.00 Bedroom Suites	\$52.00
\$175.00 Bedroom Suites	\$140.00		

Lifelong Friendships in Handsome Dining-Room Pieces

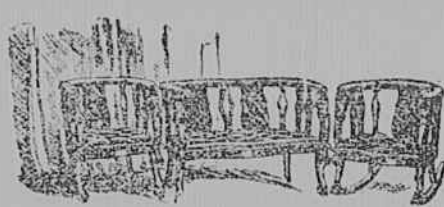
\$15.00 Buffets	\$9.75	\$10.00 Dining Tables	\$7.50
\$20.00 Buffets	\$16.25	\$15.00 Dining Tables	\$11.50
\$25.00 Buffets	\$19.75	\$20.00 Dining Tables	\$16.00
\$30.00 Buffets	\$22.75	\$25.00 Dining Tables	\$22.50
\$35.00 Buffets	\$25.75		
\$40.00 Dining Tables	\$29.75		



Floor Coverings

Druggets from \$9.50 to \$50

CARPETS from 30c up to \$1.75 yard.
MATTINGS from 12c up to 40c yard.

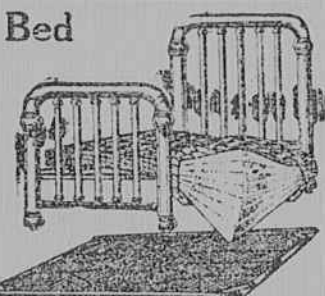


Parlor Suites

THREE-PIECE.

\$25.00 Parlor Suites	\$14.50
\$30.00 Parlor Suites	\$22.50
\$40.00 Parlor Suites	\$30.00
\$50.00 Parlor Suites	\$45.00
\$60.00 Parlor Suites	\$52.50
\$70.00 Parlor Suites	\$60.00
\$80.00 Parlor Suites	\$67.50
\$90.00 Parlor Suites	\$75.00
\$100.00 Parlor Suites	\$82.50

Brass Bed Economy



\$19.50 Brass Beds	\$12.00
\$27.50 Brass Beds	\$19.00
\$34.00 Brass Beds	\$22.00
\$37.50 Brass Beds	\$29.50
\$40.00 Brass Beds	\$32.00



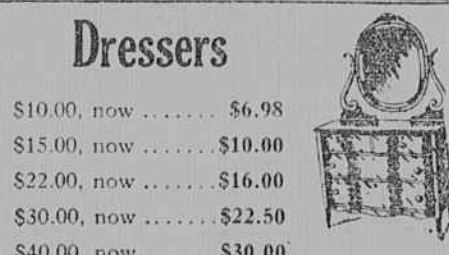
Chiffohniers

\$6.50, now	\$3.98
\$10.00, now	\$8.00
\$12.00, now	\$9.50
\$18.00, now	\$14.00
\$25.00, now	\$19.00



Bargain Extra Special Solid Oak Chiffohnier

FRENCH BEVELED MIRROR
THIS WEEK ONLY
\$8.48



Dressers

\$10.00, now	\$6.98
\$15.00, now	\$10.00
\$22.00, now	\$16.00
\$30.00, now	\$22.50
\$40.00, now	\$30.00



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of this Costa Rican republic. The

banana plantations form but a small part of it, and they are confined to a strip of the lowlands along the Caribbean Sea. There are similar lowlands on the Pacific, but the bulk of the country is made up of these mountains, which roll over one another in all sorts of shapes, now in great gorges and again in little hollows or nests of comparatively smooth land, which are covered with farms.

Some of the mountains are over two miles in height, and from one of them, Irazu, you can see the two oceans, the Atlantic and the Pacific, each being only about seventy-five miles away. That volcanic peak can be reached from Cartago, which is just thirty miles from Limon, and we may possibly ascend it before we leave Costa Rica. Its two craters are now quiet, but they are liable at any time to burst into action. This country has nineteen volcanoes, and some of them are perpetually smoking. The average height of the mountains, however, is only that of the tallest peaks of the Alleghenies, and they can be cultivated almost to the tops.

Down at Port Limon it is hot. It is so tropical that the native cannot labor on account of the climate and Jamaican negroes have been brought in to do the hard work. Higher up we shall find the people cream-white. They are the descendants of the Guillemites, a hardy and intelligent race from north Spain, who are far superior to the descendants of the Spanish of other parts of Central America, and also to those of the South American continent. They are an independent people, and the most of them are property owners, and liberty lovers. They do not believe in revolutions, and for more than a generation they have had continuous peace. This can be said of no other Central American State.

The Republic in a Nutshell.
But before I take you on the trip up the mountains let me put this little land in a nutshell. You know where it lies. Considering Panama as the hinge which joins the North and South American continents, Costa Rica is the lowermost country of our grand division. It borders on Panama, and just now a party of American scientists, headed by Mr. John Hayford, the eminent geographer and scientist, is mapping the boundaries which are now in dispute. On the north is Nicaragua, and San Jose, where I am writing, lies in the center of the highlands, just about half way between. The country, all told, contains a little more than 15,000 square miles. It is just twice the size of Vermont or New Hampshire. It is twice as large as Maryland, more than half as big as South Carolina, about one-third the area of Illinois and more than two times that of Massachusetts.

The most of Costa Rica, as I have said, is made up of these highlands. They are so broken that they remind one of the illustrations which one of the explorers of the days of Columbus gave to the King of Spain to show him the character of the island of Haiti. That man took a sheet of paper and crumpled it up into a ball in his hand. He then pulled it apart and threw it. It all wrinkled and crumpled, on the table, saying: "Your Majesty, Haiti is like that." Well, the same may be said of Costa Rica. From one end to the other it is a mass of great wrinkles and folds, but the soil which fills up the wrinkles and covers the folds is composed of volcanic ashes and mud, and is one of the richest soils upon earth. The land will produce both temperate and tropical fruits. Most of the country is so high above the sea that the climate is perpetual spring, and as far as the

weather goes, it reminds one of that

inscription which was carved on the marble room in the palace of Delhi: "If there is a paradise on earth it is this! It is this! It is this!"

Climbing the Central American Andes.

But we can see the country better by taking a trip from the Atlantic seacoast up to this highland city of San Jose. The Northern Railway, which is leased by the United Fruit Company, starts at Port Limon and climbs right over the mountains. It is about ninety miles to the top of the pass, and in that distance we ascend almost 5,000 feet. The road then goes down in the neighborhood of 2,000 feet to the capital, leaving us at about three-quarters of a mile over sea level.

There is now another road which has been continued down the western side of the mountains to the Pacific. That was completed only last year, and it has given the country a railroad trunk line from ocean to ocean. The fare on the Northern Railway is about 5 cents a mile and freight rates are comparatively high. The road is a narrow gauge, but the roadbed is well ballasted, and as the locomotives and other rolling stock was made in America, the trip is quite comfortable.

Leaving Port Limon, we go out into the jungle, and for some miles skirt the Atlantic, whose silvery waves are rolling up on the shore. On our left are many coconut groves, the trees of which are so close to the cars that the nuts might fall down and crack the heads of the brakemen. After a while we come to the banana estates and ride for an hour or so through a dense forest made up of these wide-leaved rustling green plants. They reach as high as the cars and are so close that we can almost pull the fruit from the stems.

We are then cutting the bananas and laying them on beds of leaves by the tracks. Later on they will be carefully corded up and transferred to the cars. As we go on the long rises, we stop at Madre de Dios, and a little later reach the valley of the Reventazon River, an emerald green stream which flows down the wild valley which forms the greater part of the route to the highlands. This river winds in and out, now passing through gorges between great walls of bright green. One bend is known as the Devil's Elbow, and above this are precipitous green walls a thousand feet high. The track winds along the sides of them and as you look up your view is bordered with emerald cliffs and roofed by the sky. Except for its green tint the water of the river is beautifully clear, save where it falls over the steep, foaming and bubbling, transforming its emerald to silver.

A Botanical Garden.
An then the vegetation. Our way up the mountains is through a botanical garden more gorgeous and more beautiful than the famed creations of Java, Hongkong or Ceylon. The plants change as we rise and we have hundreds of flowers and trees the names of which we have never heard and which few Americans have ever seen.

The first part of the journey is through palm trees. Further on we find tropical giants of other arborescent varieties with trunks as big around as a flour barrel and 100 or 200 feet high. The limbs of some are covered with vines and their trunks are wrapped around with long lamas or vegetable ropes which extend to the ground and root themselves in the earth. In places these lamas have vines connected with them and the trunks of the trees seem to be draped in cloaks or mantles with great hobble skirts of bright

Green.

I wish I could picture the orchids. They cover the dead branches and hang from the live ones. They are of several hundred varieties, and now and then we see one in flower. There are other air plants of every description, and, in short, such a dense mass of strange luxuriant and beautiful vegetation, including flowers, trees and vines, that the eye alone can comprehend its great beauty. It is impossible for the pen to describe it.

The splendor of the mountains corresponds with the vegetation. I have traveled along the Andes from Panama to the Straits of Magellan. The slopes of the west coast from Ecuador to Valparaiso are rugged and rocky, and as a rule the most arid parts of the Sierra Nevada. They are bare, however, by the great desert which, beginning at the south end of Ecuador, skirts the western coast of the South American continent for 2,000 miles, and they are as dry as its sands. The Andes of Costa Rica are covered with green and the green is only along the clouds. The air is full of moisture, and there are clouds everywhere. They chase themselves along the green canyons. They nestle in the laps of the mountains and cover their tops. They blow up to the railroad cars and envelop us in mist and rain. They are so close that we can almost feel the moisture and rain shoot out into the pure air beyond.

I wish I could show you the winding of this Northern railway track as it goes up the hills. It has not yet been discovered by the tourist who dies off every summer to Europe to see the Swiss Alps, but in many respects it is equally grand with the railways of Switzerland and the most interesting because it is almost unknown. The road winds about like a corker as it climbs up the Central American mountains. It has horseshoe curves more wonderful than those of the Pennsylvania Railroad—curves which are sharper and rounder and are more like horseshoes, in fact.

Moreover, the hills rise above these curves for hundreds of feet, and we wind our way about what seems to be a mighty, dark, and the densest of green. At times we are on the edge of the sides of a gorge and by looking down and following the lines of the horseshoes we can see the Reventazon River, splashing its silvery foam as it rolls over the boulders. In one place the eye can follow the silvery streak for many miles.

Among the Coffee Plantations.
There are but few towns on the road up the mountains. They are mostly shacks of one story with the roofs overhanging so as to cover the porch in front and behind. Outside the porches the awnings are made of more than twelve feet square and are made of family lives in one room. In some places we see villages of such houses and rising higher we find the comfortable little country houses of the coffee planters. The plantations devoted to coffee are 2,000 or 3,000 feet above the sea. They increase as we near San Jose, and we finally pass through a country where there is nothing but coffee. The trees are shaded by banana or plantain trees. They are not more than ten or twelve feet in height. They are spindling and the trunks at the base are about as big around as your wrist. They have shining green leaves like those of the holly, and the red berries containing the beans are now ripe for the picking. The berries are joined close to the branches without stems and each contain the two little seeds which form the core of commerce. It is wonderful how the coffee lands are utilized.

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